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## What are the Best Sources for Finding Qualified Candidates with Disabilities?

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## What are the Best Sources for Finding Qualified Candidates with Disabilities?

### Abstract

**Question:** What are the best sources for finding qualified candidates with disabilities to fill jobs in Engineering, IT, Finance, HR, and Manufacturing?

### Keywords

human resources, disability and work, disability, inclusion, finding qualified candidates with disabilities, candidates with disabilities

### Comments

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From: Scott Ross & Bryan Macfarlane

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Question:**

What are the best sources for finding qualified candidates with disabilities to fill jobs in Engineering, IT, Finance, HR, and Manufacturing?

### **Current Situation:**

The diversity employees with disabilities bring to the workforce is a valued commodity by this company. It views hiring employees with disabilities as a positive for their organization. This segment of the labor market is underrepresented and also under explored, thus there is an opportunity to increase provide an additional advantage to competitors through the hiring process. In addition to being a good corporate citizen, hiring people with disabilities can increase a companies' ROI and provide tax advantages.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) is developing a set of new rules that will set specific goals to increase the representation of workers with disabilities. The OFCCP governs organizations contracted with the federal government. This new proposal mandates that organizations set a hiring goal of seven percent of their workforce in each job group be employees with disabilities. Other proposed requirements include improved data collection and record-keeping.<sup>2</sup>

### **Recommendations:**

This company should first ensure all hiring managers are on the same page regarding hiring candidates with disabilities. According to a 2011 study, the top reasons employees with disabilities are not hired are concerns about the cost of accommodations, worries about how to handle the needs of a worker with a disability, and fears that workers with disabilities will not be able to be fired, if necessary.<sup>3</sup> The company should ensure its training and policies address these issues with hiring managers.

Some best practices for recruiting candidates at the local level include using state vocational rehabilitation programs, hiring disabled veterans (there are 2.9 million in the United States) through programs like the REALifelines program, and investigating local job fairs by disability organizations.<sup>4</sup>

The company should also ensure all of its recruiting materials are accessible to people with disabilities. The company could consider making braille and large-print business cards to show its commitment.

In order to meet its disability recruiting goals, this company will need to employ multiple tools and should consider the following sources to help find qualified candidates with disabilities:

**The Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network (EARN)** - This organization sponsored by the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy helps connects employers with individuals with disabilities. Employers may submit position descriptions and will receive potential candidates to consider within five business days.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy

<sup>2</sup> Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs

<sup>3</sup> Kaye, H.S.

<sup>4</sup> Hasse, J.

**Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD)** - COSD connects students with disabilities from over 600 colleges and universities with over 500 employers, including recruiting summits and a nationwide job posting system.

**GettingHired** - This paid service serves as a social networking tool to connect talented individuals with disabilities with employers. Jobs are sorted into 56 categories, including engineering, IT, human resources and finance.

**Emerging Leaders** - Emerging Leaders provides talented undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities with challenging summer internships. Target schools include Ivy League universities and schools like MIT, NYU and UCLA. This resource would be especially useful for recruiting candidates in finance positions.

**Entry Point!** - Entry Point! is part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The program partners with companies to identify undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities for paid summer internships. The students must be studying "science, engineering, mathematics, computer science and some field of business".

#### **Promoting Disclosure of Disability for Reporting:**

In addition to hiring qualified candidates with disabilities, This company must track the number of its employees who have disabilities in order to meet the proposed seven percent target. First, it is important to understand requesting information regarding disability is not prohibited by law, and in fact may be required under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, as long as the process is performed properly.

Employers can collect anonymous data as long as the disclosure is voluntary and employee identifying information is not associated with the dataset. Furthermore, the company must also be able to explain how collecting the information will help people with disabilities. This explanation may be as simple as one sentence.<sup>5</sup>

Because the company must report on its progress of reaching the seven percent target, it has an incentive to make sure employees feel comfortable disclosing their disabilities. The Society for Human Resource Management recently surveyed 585 employees with disabilities to determine the most important factors related to their decision whether or not to disclose their disability.

The most important factors supporting disclosure were *an open and supportive supervisor/employee relationship, a disability-friendly workplace, and evidence of active recruitment of individuals with disabilities*. The top factors that discouraged disclosure were *concern that the employer might focus more on disability than on abilities, the risk of losing health care, and a fear of limited opportunities for promotion*. Notably, only 28% of employees cited *desire for privacy* as a major factor.<sup>6</sup> By addressing these factors, the company may increase how many of its employees disclose disabilities.

#### **Conclusion:**

Developing an HRM system that allows this company to stay in compliance with new rules and keep its position as a good corporate citizen is critical to the organization's success. The resources and

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<sup>5</sup> Rudstam, H. H.

<sup>6</sup> Hastings, R. R.

information above along with further guidance in the suggested reading attached will help the company be prepared when Section 503 regulations go into effect.

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- Rudstam, H. H. (2013, April 6). (B. Macfarlane , & S. Ross, Interviewers)
- U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy. (n.d.). Diversifying Your Workforce.

## **Further References**

Cornell University Employment & Disability Institute

Phone: 1-800-949-4232

<http://www.makingworkhappen.org/Employers/resources.cfm?Tool=5>

The Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network (EARN)

Phone: 1-855-275-3276

[www.askearn.org](http://www.askearn.org)

Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD)

Phone: 865-974-7148

<http://www.cosdonline.org/>

GettingHired

Phone: 1-866-352-7481

[www.gettinghired.com](http://www.gettinghired.com)

Emerging Leaders

Phone: 516-465-1519

<http://www.emerging-leaders.com/>

Entry Point!

Phone: 202-326-6649

<http://ehrweb01.aaas.org/entrypoint/contact-us/>